

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OFA-01 CG-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 COME-00 AGR-05

INT-05 /087 W

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R 021929Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7165

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 NASSAU 1439

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR BF UK

SUBJ: FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS: APPROACH BY BRITISH HIGH
COMMISSIONER

REF: A) NASSAU 647, B) NASSAU 1014, C) NASSAU 1350

1. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER PETER MENNELL CALLED ON ME LAST WEEK IN RESPONSE TO MY EARLIER OFFER TO FILL HIM IN ON THE LOBSTER NEGOTIATIONS. MENNELL REACTED VERY MUCH AS WE OURSELVES HAVE, NAMELY, THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE GCOB COULD NOT ACCEPT THAT AN AGREEMENT OF SOME SORT WAS IN THEIR INTEREST.

2. TOWARD THE CONCLUSION OF THIS PART OF OUR DISCUSSION, MENNELL ASKED WHETHER I THOUGHT THE FAILURE OF THE LOBSTER NEGOTIATIONS WOULD PRECLUDE A SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION ON THE FACILITIES. I REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE, ALTHOUGH CONCEDING THAT THE ATMOSPHERE FOR A SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION MIGHT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED. HOWEVER, IN BALANCE, I WAS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT ISSUES INTRINSICALLY INVOLVED WITH THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES WERE MORE GERMANE TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME WAS POSSIBLE.

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EM MENNELL THEN TOOK OUT OF HIS POCKET A MESSAGE WHICH HE SAID HE HAD JUST RECEIVED FROM LONDON PERTAINING TO THE BRITISH BASE NEGOTIATIONS. (DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL FROM REFS A AND B THAT EMBASSY HAS BEEN KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH UK/GCOB PROGRESS ON THE BASES. IN GENERAL, MENNELL HAD INDICATED EARLIER THAT HMG WAS REASONABLY CLOSE TO CONCLUDING A SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENT.) MENNELL THEN READ FROM THE CABLE HE HAD JUST RECEIVED, THE ESSENCE OF WHICH WAS A WHITEHALL JUDGMENT WHICH STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE FOR HMG TO CONCLUDE THEIR BASE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GCOB IN THE ABSENCE OF ASSURING A COORDINATED APPROACH WITH THE USG. MORE SPECIFICALLY, MENNELL WAS INSTRUCTED TO APPROACH ME WITH A PROPOSAL THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS ENTER INTO CONSULTATION WITH REGARD TO THE STATUS AND FUTURE DIRECTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. BEYOND THIS, THE MESSAGE ALSO INDICATED THAT HMG WOULD WISH PRIOR TO CONCLUDING ITS AGREEMENT WITH THE GCOB TO ASSURE ITS CONTINUED ACCESS TO OUR AUTEC FACILITY. MENNELL ASKED FOR MY REACTIONS.

4. FINESSING THE POINT ON CONTINUED ACCESS TO AUTEC, I SAID THAT IT WAS MY OWN PERSONAL JUDGMENT THAT CONSULTATIONS WITH HMG WERE DESIRABLE. I REMINDED HIM THAT, AS HE WELL KNEW, HE AND I HAD IN FACT CARRIED ON A CLOSE AND CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON WHERE MATTERS STOOD. I THEN PROCEEDED TO GIVE HIM A BRIEF RUNDOWN OF LATEST DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING THE LETTER OF AUGUST 15 (REF C) FROM ADDERLEY TO ME, EXPLAINING BRIEFLY THE CONTRASTING POINTS OF VIEW AS BETWEEN THE USG AND GCOB ON THE RELEVANCE OF BAHAMIAN ECONOMIC VIABILITY TO FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS. I TOLD MENNELL THAT I HAD NOT AS YET RESPONDED TO ADDERLEY LETTER WISHING TO HAVE THE LOBSTER ISSUE SETTLE DOWN AND HOPEFULLY AVOIDING EMOTIONAL OVERTONES GENERATED THEREBY BEFORE RE-ENGAGING THE GCOB ON THE FACILITIES MATTER. I THEN ASKED MENNELL WHAT THE LATEST STATUS OF THEIR DISCUSSIONS WAS.

5. MENNELL REPEATED WHAT HE HAD EARLIER TOLD ME, NAMELY, THAT ADDERLEY HAD RECENTLY STATED THAT HE EXPECTED TO BE IN TOUCH WITH MENNELL IN THE NEAR FUTURE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PURSUING THEIR BASE NEGOTIATIONS, MENTIONING THAT THE GCOB WOULD BE MAKING A SPECIFIC PROPOSAL IN CONNECTION THEREWITH. MENNELL REMINDED ME THAT THEIR NEGOTIATIONS TO DATE INVOLVED A 3-1/2

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MILLION POUND COMMITMENT WHICH WAS TO BE MADE IN THE FORM OF ADDITIONAL NAVAL PATROL CRAFT AND ASSOCIATED TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. IN ADDITION, HOWEVER, AT THE REQUEST OF THE GCOB, HMG HAD CONDUCTED A STUDY OF CORAL HARBOR TO DETERMINE WHAT WAS REQUIRED TO MAKE IT INTO A NEW NAVAL PATROL BASE. THE CONCLUSION WAS THAT TO DEVELOP A MINIMUM CAPABILITY DOLS 2 MILLION WOULD BE REQUIRED. WHILE MENNELL ANTICIPATED THAT THE GCOB MIGHT VERY WELL HOPE THAT HMG WOULD RAISE ITS

CONTRIBUTION TO INCLUDE THIS FACILITY, MENNELL STATED THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS MOST UNLIKELY. HMG WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE GCOB UTILIZING A PORTION OF THE 3-1/2 MILLION POUNDS FOR THIS PURPOSE, BUT IT WOULD HAVE TO BE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PATROL CRAFT, TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. MENNELL FURTHER STATED THAT AN ANALYSIS CONDUCTED OF WHAT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN A BROADER GCOB CAPABILITY, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY THAT OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD (OBVIOUSLY ON A SMALLER SCALE), WOULD "IN ADDITION TO REQUIRING A LARGE INITIAL EXPENDITURE RUN AT THE ANNUAL RATE OF ABOUT DOLS 10 MILLION." MENNELL OFFERED THE VIEW THAT THAT LEVEL OF RESOURCES SEEMED UNAVAILABLE TO THE BAHAMIANS.

6. I ASKED MENNELL TO CLARIFY PRECISELY THE TERMS IN WHICH THE GCOB 3.5 MILLION POUND COMMITMENT WAS COUCHED. HE EXPLAINED THAT IT TOOK THE FORM OF A "GIFT" OFFERED AT THE TIME OF AND IN THE LIGHT OF PROSPECTIVE GCOB INDEPENDENCE BUT IN ANTICIPATION OF CONTINUED HMG ACCESS TO FACILITIES IN THE BAHAMAS, INCLUDING CONTINUED USE OF AUTECH. MENNELL WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE HMG COMMUNICATIONS RELAY STATION HERE ON NEW PROVIDENCE WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO BE RETAINED INDEFINITELY WAS, AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT UK DEFENSE REVIEW, NOW BEING PHASED OUT. ACCORDINGLY, THEIR PRESENCE WOULD BE LIMITED TO ACCESS TO AUTECH, ALTHOUGH WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF THE USE OF CERTAIN OF THE REAL ESTATE IN THE BAHAMAS FOR PRACTICING MARINE LANDINGS. (COMMENT: ON THIS LATTER POINT, MENNELL HAS BEEN MOST IMPRECISE. WHEN I ASKED HIM WHETHER LANGUAGE AUTHORIZING SUCH EXERCISES WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THEIR AGREEMENT, HE CONFESSED THAT THEY HAD NOT YET DRAWN UP THE LANGUAGE OF THEIR AGREEMENT, BUT HE SUPPOSED THAT SOME SUCH AUTHORITY WOULD EXIST.) HMG HAS, HOWEVER, CONDUCTED SUCH EXERCISES IN THE PAST AND CURRENTLY PLANS TO DO SO ON AN EXPANDED SCALE THIS FALL.

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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7. MENNELL ALSO STATED THAT IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE USG HAD COMMITTED ITSELF TO PROVIDE THE AIR COMPONENT TO COMPLEMENT THE BRITISH NAVAL COMPONENT OF GCOB PATROL NEEDS. I SAID THIS WAS NOT MY UNDERSTANDING. I REHEARSED FOR MENNELL THE SEQUENCE WHICH GAVE RISE TO OUR CONDUCTING OUR SURVEY IN 1973, INDICATING THAT THE SURVEY WAS WITHOUT ANY COMMITMENT WHATSOEVER TO OUR SUPPLYING THE HARDWARE OR TRAINING CALLED FOR. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT WE HAD NEVER RECEIVED A RESPONSE FROM THE GCOB TO THAT SURVEY REPORT. IN RESPONSE TO MENNELL'S QUESTION, I INDICATED THAT IT CERTAINLY WAS POSSIBLE THAT THE GCOB MIGHT WISH TO UTILIZE THE RECEIPTS FROM OUR BASE RENTAL TO PURCHASE ITEMS CONTAINED WITHIN THE SURVEY REPORT, IN WHICH EVENT IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY MAKE SENSE TO BE SURE THAT THESE DID NOT DUPLICATE WHAT THE HMG SUPPLIED, BUT THAT AT THIS POINT I HAD NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE GCOB WOULD IN FACT CHOOSE TO APPLY BASE RENTAL IN SUCH A WAY, AS CONTRASTED, FOR EXAMPLE, TO MEETING OTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS.

8. I TOLD MENNELL THAT I WOULD REPORT HIS GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATIONS AND THEIR DESIRE FOR A CLOSE COORDINATION IN OUR POSITIONS. I SAID THAT I ASSUMED HE AGREED WITH ME THAT WAS SUCH COORDINATION TO BE AGREED UPON IT SHOULD NOT BE OVERT IN THAT IF OBVIOUS, THIS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE A NEGATIVE
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POLITICAL IMPACT VIS-A-VIS THE GCOB. MENNELL AGREED ENTIRELY.

9. COMMENT: A) IT SEEMS TO ME APPARENT THAT FROM THE HMG POINT OF VIEW, THEY ARE ANXIOUS TO NAIL DOWN THEIR ACCESS TO AUTEC BEFORE FINALIZING ANY DEAL WITH THE GCOB. UNDOUBTEDLY, THIS IS WHAT STIMULATES THEIR INTEREST IN CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH US.

?) AT THE SAME TIME, SUCH CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION COULD BE VERY MUCH IN OUR OWN INTEREST. SINCE, IN OUR OWN CONSIDERATION OF THE FACILITIES MATTER, WE HAVVE IN ANY EVENT

ALWAYS ASSUMED A CONTINUED HMG ACCESS TO AUTEC, WE WOULD HARDLY LOSE ANYTHING BY AGREEING TO COORDINATE WITH THE BRITISH. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THAT COORDINATION RESULTED IN THE GCOB EVENTUALLY COMING TO UNDERSTAND THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE USG THERE WOULD BE AN EVENTUAL PHASE OUT OF OUR FACILITIES HERE, WHICH IN TURN WOULD MEAN NO HMG ACCESS

TO AUTEC AND THAT THIS IN TURN MIGHT REDUCE THE INTEREST OF THE HMG IN REACHING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GCOB, THAT MIGHT ADD TO OUR OVERALL LEVERAGE. OF COURSE, A LOT DEPENDS ON HOW FIRMLY THE 3-1/2 MILLION POUND COMMITMENT IS. IF THERE IS SUFFICIENT LATITUDE TO PERMIT THE BRITISH TO SUGGEST AT SOME POINT TO THE GCOB THAT AN ABSENCE OF A U.S. AUTEC FACILITY WOULD REDUCE HIM INTEREST IN A PRESENCE AND THUS REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE BASIS FOR THE 3-1/2 MILLION POUND COMMITMENT, THIS WOULD OBVIOUSLY PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT LEVERAGE. I HAVE NO IDEA HOW FAR ALONG THIS LINE THE BRITISH WOULD FEEL THEY COULD OR WOULD WISH TO GO. UP TO NOW, I HAVE ASSUMED THAT THEY FELT PRETTY WELL LOCKED IN TO PROVIDE 3-1/2 MILLION POUNDS AND IT WAS ONLY THE DETAILS WHICH REMAINED TO BE RESOLVED. THIS LATEST APPROACH SUGGESTS THAT LONDON MAY HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS ON THIS MATTER. C) WHILE, AS I INDICATED TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS DURING HIS VISIT HERE, I HOPE TO RETURN IN THE NEAR FUTURE FOR CONSULTATION ON ENTIRE FACILITIES MATTER, MY OWN VIEW IS THAT WE NEED NOT DELAY IN AGREEING TO FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH HMG. WHETHER THEY SHOULD BE CONDUCTED HERE BETWEEN MENNEL AND MYSELF OR IN WASHINGTON OR LONDON IS WORTH FURTHER CONSIDERATION. MY OFFHAND REACTION IS THAT DETERMINING DEGREE OF BRITISH INTEREST IN CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT IN AUTEC AND DEGREE TO WHICH THIS VARIABLE WOULD AFFECT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO CONSUMMATE AGREEMENT WITH THE GCOB WOULD PROBABLY BEST BE AS-
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CERTAINED IF WHITEHALL AND MOD PERSONNEL WERE INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS. THIS SUGGESTS TO ME WASHINGTON OR LONDON AS BEST VENUE.

10. THERE IS ANOTHER COMPLICATING FACTOR WHICH BEARS ON THE ABOVE. IN OUR CONTINUING PREPARATION FOR THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS, IT HAS COME TO OUR ATTENTION THAT THE BRITISH MOD (OR POSSIBLY ADMIRALTY) APPEARS TO HAVE TITLE TO THE LAND OCCUPIED BY AUTEC. SO FAR, OUR INVESTIGATION HAS NOT INDICATED WHETHER THIS WAS BY PURCHASE OR LONG-TERM LEASE, BUT SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT BRITISH OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL OF LAND REVERTED BACK TO GCOB AT INDEPENDENCE. IF OUR INFORMATION IS CORRECT, THIS OBVIOUSLY RAISES A WHOLE HOST OF QUESTIONS FOR OUR NEGOTIATIONS. EMBASSY IS CONTINUING TO DIG INTO FACTS WHICH ARE AVAILABLE HERE LOCALLY AND WE HOPE TO HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO PROVIDE DETAILS IN SEPTTEL. IN THE MEANTIME, ANY INFORMATION WHICH WASHINGTON AGENCIES MAY HAVE CONCERNING HMG OWNERSHIP OF THE AUTEC SITES WOULD BE HELPFUL.

11. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION.
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